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# LA MORTOLA



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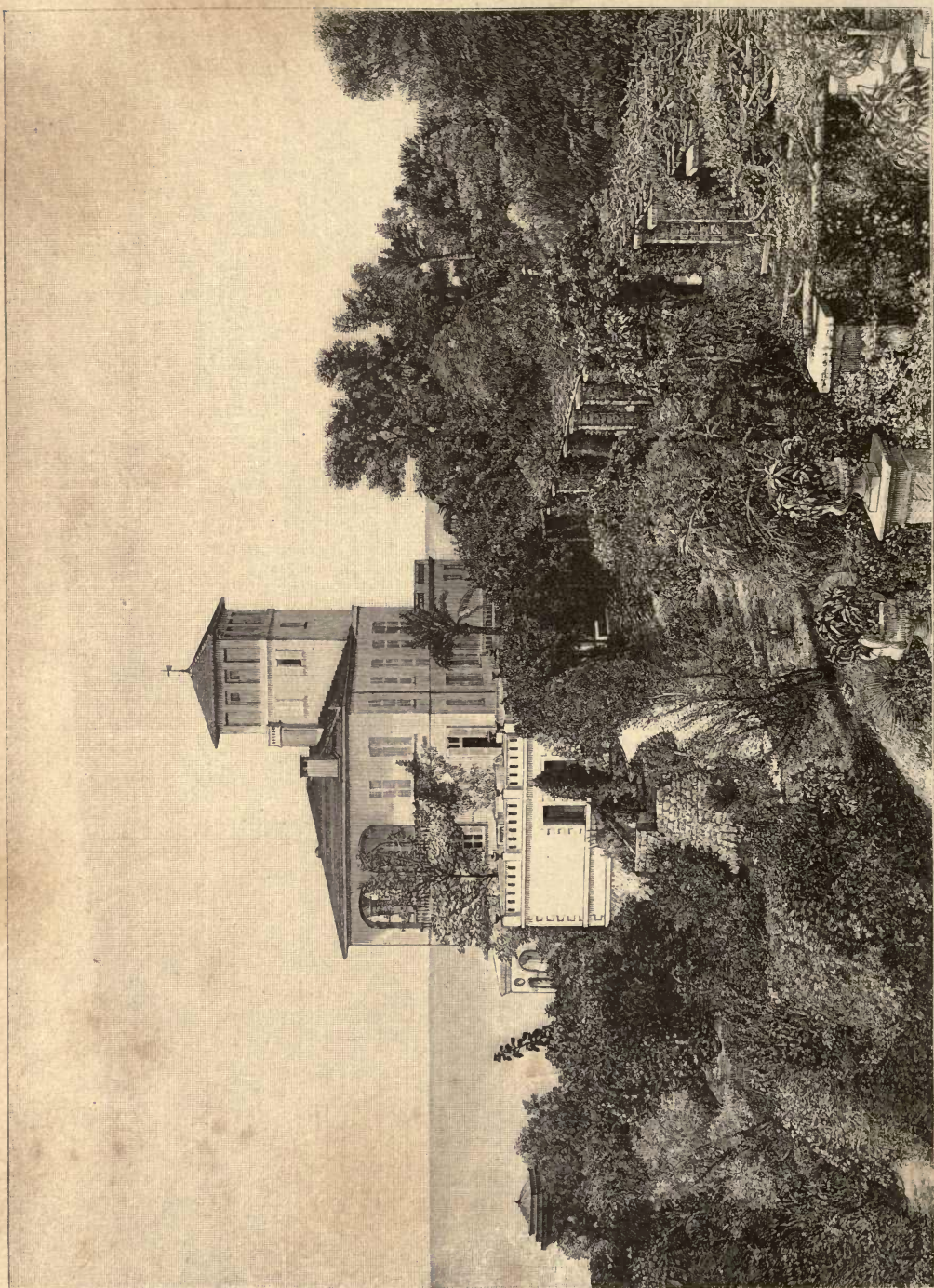
LA MORTOLA

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PALAZZO ORENCO.



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# LA MORTOLA

A SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE GARDEN OF  
THOMAS HANBURY, ESQ.

KNIGHT OF THE ORDER OF ST. MAURICE AND ST. LAZARUS, AND  
OF THE CROSS OF THE CROWN OF ITALY

BY

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*TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN*

BY

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## LA MORTOLA.

STARTING from Garavan, that part of the Bay of Mentone which is so well protected by the red rocks of the "Berceau or Longuira," a mountain rising to 3600 feet above the sea, one reaches, after a short half-hour's walk, the Gorge of the Pont St. Louis, which since 1806 has been bridged over by the famous Corniche road. At this point, as at many others, the picturesque road does full justice to its name, "La Cornice"—the cornice. On the left the road skirts the limestone rocks which there stretch forward to the coast, while on the right it is protected by supporting walls. The stone upon the bridge bears on the west side the inscription "France," and on the opposite side "Italia," for French territory has extended to this point since the campaign of 1859. From the frontier the road mounts abruptly to a promontory whose steep sides have been metamorphosed into charming gardens by Dr. Bennett, a physician residing in Mentone, who has bestowed years of labour upon this task. These gardens surround an old Saracen watch-tower, and look down upon the far too splendidly-situated Italian custom-house. In this picturesque garden the fruit of the date-palm ripens, although it never attains much sweetness. Higher up the mountain peeps out the little church of Grimaldi, the first village on Italian soil, nestling among its olive-trees, which we soon leave behind as we proceed eastwards. For a long distance only a few meagre specimens of *Pinus halepensis* clothe the highest points of these dry and sterile limestone rocks. All the more charming seems the view, looking back over the double bay of Mentone, and the beautiful harbour of Villafranca; while eastwards the eye rests with delight on the green-clothed shore of Bordighera, sharply contrasting with the white cliffs above Ventimiglia. "La Croce della Mortola," and the charming national schoolhouse opposite, mark one of the many turnings in the road

which—here 531 feet above the sea-level—turns round a well-wooded ledge of rocks and leads into a narrow chasm in the nummulitic limestone, rising on the other side to the village of Mortola. Below, on the coast-line, the nummulitic rock stretches forward as a sharp-jagged ridge into the sea, and forms the farther side of the east bay of Mentone. The valley above the bridge cuts through the property of Mr. Thomas Hanbury, who has built the schoolhouse mentioned above for the villages of Mortola, Ciotti, and Grimaldi. The road passes by the entrance-gate of this gentleman's property just below the graceful little church of La Mortola, whose campanile may be seen from a great distance. From the entrance-gate—338 feet above the level of the sea—the gardens lead down an incline of about 193 feet to the Palazzo Orengo, and then again in a gentle slope to the sea. Along the coast there are few practicable paths, and these are frequented only by smugglers and coast-guardsmen. This property belonged in former times to the noble family Orengo of Ventimiglia, the palazzo being then a modest edifice built on stony ground and surrounded by a thin growth of olives; the position, however, being always a splendid one. The present owner has made it his study since the year 1867 to collect an endless number of plants, and without changing the former characteristics of the landscape he has made for himself an original and unique garden. He who looks for fountains, curiously-cut hedges, kiosques, artfully-formed paths, grottoes, and gay ribbon gardening, will be disappointed; but the garden is rich in stately groups of trees, and in wonderful and lovely flowers and foliage. It is a peculiarly interesting study to find out which plants will flourish best in this dry climate, and in a soil which is anything but fertile. Mr. Hanbury and his clever gardeners have managed, by means of their widespread connections, to carry on a series of experiments with plants from all parts of the world. The surface of the garden covers about forty-nine acres. From the Cross of La Mortola on the Corniche road down to the rocks on the sea-coast, and from the old Roman road (Via Julia Augusta)<sup>1</sup> up to the eastern slopes of the property, the ground is so diverse in character that a total description of the whole can hardly be given.

On coming into the garden through the main entrance-gate

<sup>1</sup> Made in the year 13 B.C. in order to establish good communication between *Albingaunum* (Albenga) and *Nicea* (Nice).



the Palazzo Orenco is seen forming a centre to the surrounding grounds, not that the path leading to it has been drawn with ruler and compass, but, on the contrary, following many windings, and through a manifold variety of plants. Everywhere the graceful golden flowers of the *Acacia* are seen; these plants are Australian, and there are about seventy species in the garden, displaying a very different appearance within the sharply-defined general characteristics of the tribe of the numerous *Acaciæ*. There are the graceful pinnate leaves of *Acacia dealbata*, the short phyllodes (reminding one of willows) of the *Acacia cyanophylla*, *A. nemo-phylla*, and *A. retinoides*, or the linear leaves of *A. calamifolia*. *Acacia Kangaroo* (*A. armata*) forms a contrast to these with its small curled phyllodes vertically inserted and soon falling off. The stipules are here represented by spines. Still more threatening are the shining ivory spines of *A. horrida*, Willdenow (*A. Karroo*, Hayne; *A. eburnea*, Hort. Paris), and not less surprising the broad, thick leathery leaves of *A. excelsa*, having also their blades vertically placed. These stiff and thorny *Acacias* are, however, far surpassed by *Colletia horrida* and other menacing *Rhamnaceæ* from Chili, Peru, and Mexico. Among the native bushes *Calycotome spinosa*, Link (*Spartium*, L.; *Cytisus*, Lamarck), most resemble the above-mentioned shrubs. Among the flowering shrubs the great *Polygala* bushes are especially conspicuous—*P. Dalmaisiana*; *Diosma alba*; and *Solanum Warszewiezii* with its tree-like spreading branches; the great-leaved *Wigandia caracasana*; a number of *Salvias*, among others, *Salvia nigrescens*; *S. camphorata*, which has the smell of the camphor from Borneo rather than that of common camphor; and *S. albo-cærulea*, with its scent of ripe fruit; also *Medicago arborea*, L., a native of Tuscany and Naples; *Genista ferox*; the white-blossomed *Cytisus palmensis*, from the Balearic Isles; *Veronica salicifolia*; *Teucrium fruticans*, L. Most noticeable, too, are the huge flower-heads of the Mexican *Echium frutescens*, like a gigantic specimen of our *Echium vulgare*, itself by no means a delicate plant. The gray densely-pubescent composite *Pteronia incana* (*Asteroidæ*) unites the elegance of its yellow flower-heads with the most delicious scent of apricots. Here and there are slender blossoming sprays of the *Buddleia* species, of which we know nothing prejudicial, though they belong to the poisonous natural order of the *Loganiaceæ*, which yields the deadly strychnine. Walls and rocks

are reddened by the showy three-leaved bracts of the *Bougainvillea*; the flowers, however, are comparatively insignificant. The above-mentioned names can give but a faint idea of such surroundings, among which rise countless groups, remarkable for their stately height, the curious formation of their abundant foliage, their thick fleshy leaves, or their green leafless stalks. At first sight the slender date-palms take precedence, but the proprietor has no particular predilection for palms, which, however, are further represented here by the short-stemmed *Phoenix tenuis*, by *Pritchardia filifera*, *Cocos australis*, *C. botryophora*, and *C. flexuosa*, *Livistona*, *Chamærops*, etc. *Phoenix dactylifera* is to be met with in great numbers in the neighbourhood of Bordighera, while there is a choice collection of the most splendid palms in the garden of Monsieur Dognin at Cannes.

The Coniferæ in the garden of the Palazzo Orengo are also remarkable. The original specimens of *Pinus halepensis*, Miller, around the property have been carefully preserved, and the forest growth enriched by the planting of the stately *Pinus Pinaster*, Solander, by *P. canariensis*, *P. insignis*, and others of the very long-leaved kinds. Among these are the stately forms of the *Cupressus sempervirens*, L. The religious respect with which the ancient Persian regarded this tree in its Asiatic home accompanied the cypress to Italy. In the time of *Augustus* it was considered the tree of mourning, as it is still. (Compare *Lajard*, "Recherches sur le culte du Cyprès pyramidal chez les peuples civilisés de l'antiquité," 2 parts, et supplément. Paris, 1854. 4° avec 21 planches.) Here also the cypresses remind us of a long-forgotten cemetery, and in the opinion of the inhabitants the name of the village, *Mortola*, means a place of burial. The *Cupressus macrocarpa* differs exceedingly in its manner of growth from the obelisk-like form of the oriental cypress; the former spreads out its branches in a straight line far and wide over the low bushes of the *Juniperus Oxycedrus*, a small tree, however, nearly related to it. To the native specimens of this latter species there have been added a few specimens of the Syrian *Juniperus drupacea*, Labillardière. *Calitris quadrivalvis*, Ventenat (or *Thuja articulata*) thrives well here. It was familiar to the Romans by the name *Citrus*.<sup>1</sup> On its scaly

<sup>1</sup> Boxes made of its wood were used for preserving woollen clothes against moths, the wood possessing a well-marked aromatic scent. Hence the Romans applied in later times the same name of *Citrus* to the fruit of the modern *Citrus Medica*, on account of its smell resembling that of the said wood.





THE CYPRESS AVENUE.





bark may be found an abundance of pure white hardened tears of gum *Sandarac*, which flows freely as soon as an incision is made in a branch. There are also specimens of *Araucaria Bidwillii*, *A. Cunninghamii*, *A. excelsa*, and *Cedrus Deodara*, Loudon, *Taxodium sempervirens*. The curious gray *Casuarina* would appear to belong to this group, judging only by its outward appearance. There are several beautiful examples of this tree close by the entrance-gate.

The newest intruders in this land, which has been cultivated for so many centuries, are the *Eucalyptus* trees; of these there are many kinds in the garden. *Naudin* has lately given an account of the different species of *Eucalyptus* in the "Annales des Sciences naturelles," vol. xvi., Dec. 1883. Paris.—In 1869 *Eucalyptus globulus*, Labillardière, was planted in this garden: it has now attained the height of 118 feet, and is 8 feet in girth at the height of about 18 inches from the ground. The different species of the genus *Eucalyptus* offer a great variety of scents. *Eucalyptus pendula* is most remarkable for its, according to the writer's opinion, extremely disagreeable odour; the chemical nature of the essential oil which may be distilled from the leaves of this kind is at present unknown.

Let us glance at the *olive-trees* still extant here and there; at the groups of *Bambusa*, with their smooth shining stems, black or greenish white; at the less ambitious *Erianthus* (or *Saccharum*) *Ravennæ*, *Saccharum Maddeni*, *Gynerium argenteum*, *Arundo Donax*; at the *Cyperus Papyrus*, L.,—and we find we have named nearly all those plants which strike the beholder at first sight. Such groups presuppose damp ground, which is, however, achieved here only in certain parts of the garden, and by dint of much trouble. The large cisterns in the garden secure a little necessary supply of water for the summer months, which are often quite rainless. The yearly average of cloudless days is 214, with 40 rainy days between October and April. Of aquatic plants growing well in the ponds are the *Azolla caroliniana*, allied to the *Salvinia*, the *Aponogeton distachyon* (Naiadaceæ), the *Calla* (or *Richardia*) *æthiopica*, but still more thriving is the countless army of green frogs, *Hyla arborea*. Far more shrubs and trees than the above-mentioned, however, form the soft wave-like curves of the rich foliage which, seen from the entrance-gate, mitigate the naturally rugged outlines of the landscape. It is hardly necessary to state

that the "*Agrumi*" are represented in the garden. In the part specially devoted to them there is a large yield of the most beautiful lemons. Besides the *Bergamots* and the *Pomi d'Adamo* there is the *Citrus myrtifolia* in full bloom (figured in *Et. Michel*, "Traité du Citronier," vii., Paris, 1816, tab. 4, *Citrus Bigaradia sinensis*). It is remarkable for its small sharp-edged leaves with numberless oil cells, which are particularly large towards the edge, for its large, pure white, sweet-scented blossoms, and especially for its fruit, only an inch and a half in diameter, called *Chinotto*. It is preserved by the Paris confectioners, and goes by the name of "Chinois." There is quite an array of shrubs, with stiff shining leaves, such as the *Pittosporum eugenoides*, *P. Tobira*, and other nearly allied species, *Pimelea decussata*, *Coprosma Bauerianum* (one of the New Zealand Rubiacæ), *Laurocerasus*, *Camellia soulangiana*, *Osmanthus* (*Olea*) *fragrans*, *Buxus Balearica*, *Pistacia*, *Laurus nobilis*, and *Oreodaphne californica*, the latter, termed *Laurus regalis* in Italian gardens, contains an oil, the effect of which upon the eyes and nose may be compared to that of an onion.<sup>1</sup> New Zealand, Australia, and Tasmania have contributed the curious groups of Proteaceæ, viz., *Dryandra floribunda*, *Banksia marcescens*, and other kinds: there are flourishing specimens of *Grevillea*, and of *Hakea*, and of the New Zealand flax *Phormium tenax*, all thriving well in the Antipodes of their native land. There, too, we are delighted with the soft green of the *Aralia dactylifera*, *Strelitzia*, and *Musa*, the rich leaves of the *Acanthus*, and the fresh green of the *Styrax officinalis*, with its pretty white blossoms shining out against the dark background of the *Cupressus macrocarpa*; while everywhere we are charmed with the dainty forms and gay colours of the *Cheiranthus mutabilis*, a woody crucifera from the Canary Islands, of *Diplopappus filifera*, *D. filiformis*, *Senecio præcox*, *Cassine aculeata* from Tasmania, and *Shawia paniculata* from New Zealand. The five last are hard woody composites, and present as curious an appearance to northern eyes as do the beautiful sturdy bushes of *Malva capensis*, or the yellow

<sup>1</sup> "This fine evergreen and hardy tree is described by David Douglas as forming the greater part of the forests of California, where it marks the transition between the gloomy pine forests of North-West America and the tropical-like verdure of California. He further states that it is a tree 30 to 100 feet high, with a trunk 2 to 17 feet in circumference, smooth bark and spreading branches, and that the whole plant is so strongly aromatic that even during violent hurricanes he has been obliged to remove from under its shade, the odour, a most powerful camphor-like smell, being so pungent as to produce violent sneezing."—*Bot. Mag.*, vol. lxxxviii. pl. 5320.

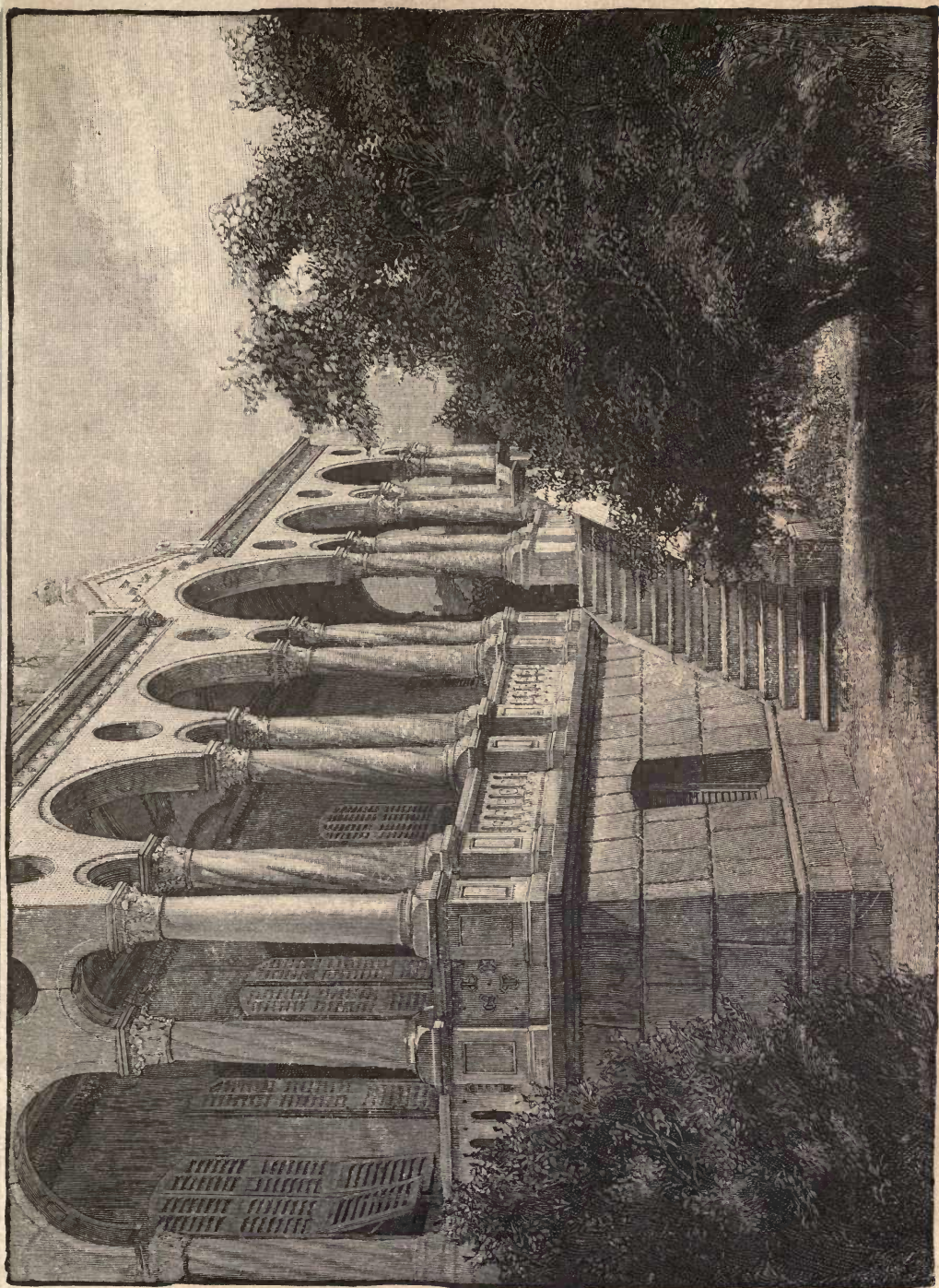


blossoms of the slender *Nicotiana glauca*, Graham, not inappropriately put among the genus *Nicotidendron* by Grisebach. Here and there appears the graceful little *Erica barbata*, while walls, rocks, and woodwork of all kinds are glorified with the light gold flowers of the lovely fragrant *Rosa Banksia*; in some places too the walls are clothed with the thick foliage of the *Ficus repens*, bearing beautiful but uneatable fruit.

Perhaps the most effective groups are those standing somewhat aside from the direct path down to the Palazzo; they have been arranged with great judgment, and it would be difficult to find such an array of curious and interesting species in any other place. Even in the distance we are attracted by the stately candelabra-like flowers of the *Agaves*, whose gigantic leaves take up the most room in these huge groups. Besides those generally grown we may mention especially *A. ferox*, *A. Rumphii*, *A. Salmiana*, *A. yuccaefolia*, and many others of massive size. Great numbers of the *Aloë* species strive with the *Agaves* for supremacy, and show even a much greater form of variety and colour, the strong stems of the *Aloë arborescens*, of *A. Africana*, and of *A. ferox*, contrasting with lower more graceful plants of *Aloë Hamburyana*, Baker, with its lovely coral-like blossoms; several of the sorts cultivated here, as also the two first mentioned, furnish the drug Aloes. On making an incision in the leaves the bitter purplish yellow juice flows out pretty freely. The flourishing of Aloes speaks volumes for the climatic peculiarities of the Riviera, for most of them come from the steppes and savannahs of South and East Africa, where snow and ice are unknown things. The mighty leaves of the *Agaves* and *Aloes* leave room between for many varieties of curious *Cacti*, and for the still more wonderful *Stapelias*, whose remarkably regular flowers generally grow singly, in marked contrast to the *Mesembryanthemums*, many branched and gay coloured, and covered with a charming number of flowers and leaves. Among the freely-growing *Mesembryanthemums*, which make such a beautiful covering for the shadeless rockwork, is seen emerging in contrast the cork-clothed rhizome of the *Testudinaria (Tamus) elephantipes*, a plant which may be found in most European greenhouses; it comes from the Cape, as do also most of the kinds of *Mesembryanthemum*. Flourishing examples of *Cycas*, *Yucca*, *Zamia*, and *Dracena* appear in such groups, towered over by the stately *Bonapartea juncea*, a relation

of the Ananas. There are the charming blossoms of the Amaryllidaceæ, *Beschorneria yuccoides* from Mexico, and of the Calendulaceæ, belonging to the genus *Othonna*, all from the Cape except *Othonna cheirifolia*. From the Canary Isles there is the *Kleinia neriifolia*, with its strong growth and fresh green. Other South African kinds of these splendid Senecionidæ—for instance *Kleinia anteuophorbia*, with its cylindrical fleshy stems devoid of foliage—nearly agree in external appearance with those species of *Euphorbia* which have the leaves and stipules reduced to a pair of spines or scales. Thus with *Kleinia anteuophorbia* there is to be classed *Euphorbia rhipsaloides*, whose cylindrical leafless stems differ more than the angular kinds from the herbaceous *Euphorbias* of Central Europe; the widely-differing types of *Euphorbiæ* are consequently remarkably well represented in the garden of the Palazzo Oregio. Near the low-growing cactus-like *Euphorbia caput Medusæ* rise vigorously two woody species which are provided with leafy blades—viz. *Euphorbia mellifera* and *E. neriifolia*, L. The latter is sacred in India to the serpent goddess Mansâ. It is frequently planted by Hindoos, who still pray to the goddess and offer sacrifices under this tree for protection from serpents (*Dymock*, "The Vegetable Materia Medica of Western India," Bombay, 1884, p. 567). Both these kinds are surpassed in elegance by the native-growing *E. dendroides*, L., which, with its forked branches, presents the appearance of a beautifully arched umbel. This is one of the most remarkable plants on the west coast of Italy; it grows to the height of  $6\frac{1}{2}$  feet, with a diameter near the ground of 2 inches. *Euphorbia dendroides* is not met with along the Adriatic, with the exception of Monte Gargano; it makes its appearance, however, again in Greece. This charming plant was noticed by the ancients. *Dioscorides* distinguished it by the appellation δεινδοειδής ("Materia Medica," ed. Kühn, iv. 162), and *Pliny* called the foliage of the "*Tithymalus dendroides*," by far the richest of all the *Euphorbias* "*comosissimum ex omnibus maxime*" ("Naturalis Historia," xxvi. 45). All along the sunny coasts numberless bushes of *E. dendroides*, with their rich display of bright yellow blossoms, calling to mind the *Sarothamnus*, the common Broom, which blooms in early summer in Central Europe and in England. The deliciously honey-scented and low-growing *E. spinosa* also covers the rocks with its thick cushions; it might be mistaken for a graceful small specimen of the *E. dendroides*,





THE MARBLE TERRACE.







but the branching of the thin stems of *E. spinosa* is totally different. Altogether both these Euphorbias take a considerable share in clothing the dry hillsides and rocks of this part of the Italian coast. Near the Palazzo Orenco and on the Punta della Mortola the *E. biglandulosa*, Desfontaines, from South Italy and Sicily, grows in great profusion; the seed of it was brought by *Daniel Hanbury* from Calabria in May 1872. This plant, like so many others in his brother's garden, is a continual reminder of that excellent man, whose early death is still so deeply lamented. But in order to complete the picture of those strange groups, formed with such unwearied care and labour, it is necessary to recollect the olive-trees, the various Acacias, Eucalyptus, the Casuarinas, picturesquely associated here with the numerous Cactus, Agaves, and Aloes. Otherwise, with regard to these latter kinds, the spectator would be transported in imagination to New Mexico, or to the parched Cape. A few steps farther we are led into a still grotto of considerable size, whose dripping water favours the growth of Cryptogams like Selaginellæ, Jungermanniaceæ, mosses, and ferns; the greatest adornment of these unpretentious grottoes is perhaps the lovely maidenhair *Adiantum Capillus Veneris*.

The foregoing paragraphs will show that the leading feature in the gardens of the Palazzo Orenco is not the cultivation of economic plants, although some of the lemon-trees and olives of an earlier period are still extant; vineyard and vegetable garden have also a place apart for themselves. Nevertheless among the great variety of plants just mentioned a good sprinkling of remarkable economic plants may be found. *Argania Sideroxylon*, Römer et Schultes, the oil-tree of Morocco, has made but little progress here during eight years, although it attains to a great age in its native country. Its importance as an oil-yielding tree is not great; a very small amount of oil is obtainable from the small kernel, and it is practically of no value to more civilised nations; even its excellent wood is eclipsed by that of more rapidly-growing trees. (Figure of *Argania*, by *Sir W. Hooker*, in the "Journal of Botany and Kew Gardens Miscellany," vi., 1854, p. 97. For further particulars of this remarkable tree see *Just's* "Botanical Annual Report," Jahresbericht in German, 1879, p. 331, and 1880, p. 751.) The Brazil wood tree, *Cæsalpinia echinata*, Lamarck, is also represented here, but the few specimens have made inconsiderable progress during about eight years. *Catha edulis*, Forskal,

belonging to the Celastraceæ, has, on the contrary, flourished well ; the leaves of this bush are used in South Arabia and in Abyssinia instead of tea ; on gathering fresh leaves the writer was enabled to recognise and demonstrate the absence of caffeine, and the presence of a minute quantity of some alkaloid. *Carica Papaya*, L., cultivated in tropical countries under the name "melon-tree," needs only to be mentioned to remind one of the property of its milky juice in making tough meat tender : it possesses also valuable medicinal qualities. The discussions concerning the native country of this "melon-tree" may be considered settled by the results of *A. de Candolle's* learned investigation, "Origine des Plantes Cultivées," 1883, p. 234. According to this author, *Carica Papaya* is indigenous to the lands and islands of the Gulf of Mexico. *Cinnamomum Camphora*, the camphor-tree of Japan and Formosa, was just beginning to open its insignificant blossoms in the end of April ; the strong smell of the leaves when rubbed proved the production of camphor even in this climate ; this plant is, however, no rarity in gardens throughout Italy. *Cydonia sinensis*, Thouin, was introduced into the south of Europe more than fifty years ago with great success : those in this garden produce fruit of astonishing size. *Drimys Winteri*, Forster, of the natural order Magnoliaceæ, grows all over the greater part of South America, from the Straits of Magellan as far as Mexico ; this tree furnishes the bark known as Winter's bark, but it is now only of secondary pharmaceutical interest ; it was described by *Clusius* as early as 1582. Three plants (Myrtaceæ) much cultivated in the tropics have just ripened their fruits—*Jambosa vulgaris*, De C. (*Eugenia Jambosa*, L.), *Psidium Cattleianum*, and *Psidium pomiferum*. Although not of great size, about an inch and a quarter in diameter, these "guavas" have a very pleasant taste, free from the volatile oil in which other Myrtaceæ so abound. Their taste is far more delicate than that of the "Japanese medlar," the yellow plum-like fruit of the *Eriobotrya* (*Photinia*) *Japonica*, Lindley. (Compare "Osterferien in Ligurien," Buchner's "Repertorium für Pharmacie," München, xxv. 1876, p. 24. English translation : "An Easter Holiday in Liguria," by Professor Flückiger, privately printed, 1877. This fruit does not ripen even on the Riviera until after the end of April. The fruit dealers of North Italy send for the first "Nespole di Giappone" from Palermo—too great an honour for this very ordinary



fruit. There are also some small plants of *Fraxinus Ornus*, the Manna-ash, reminding one of the interesting article written by *Daniel Hanbury* ("Science Papers," London, 1876, p. 355) concerning the Manna of Sicily. Near the *Illicium anisatum*, the Star anise-tree of the Chinese, stands its Japanese relation, *Illicium religiosum*, Siebold; the latter is just now in blossom; both plants bear large thick leathery leaves of a light green colour, and very brittle; those of *Illicium anisatum*, when held up to the light, show numerous oil cells, exhaling when bruised an aromatic taste and smell; this is not the case with *I. religiosum*. The poisonous fruits of the latter made some sensation in London and elsewhere in Europe in 1880, when they were found mixed by chance with some of the true Star anise. The stiff small leaves of the Chilian Monimiaceæ, *Boldoa fragrans*, Gay (Illustration in *Bentley and Trimen*, "Medicinal Plants," iii., London, 1880, p. 217), also contain an abundance of oil cells filled with a strong-smelling volatile oil, to which the "Folia Boldo" have owed during the past twelve years their presumably ephemeral position among medicinal plants. There is at present growing here only a small specimen of *Pilocarpus pennatifolius*, Lemaire, one of the Brazilian Rutaceæ, which furnishes a really valuable remedy in its alkaloid "Pilocarpine;" the plant seems to thrive so well, however, that it is to be hoped that it will make a permanent settlement here. (Illustration, *Bentley and Trimen*, "Medicinal Plants," i. p. 48; compare further, *Flückiger and Hanbury*, "Pharmacographia," 1879, p. 113.) Some few examples of the Cork Oak, *Quercus Suber*, are still too small to give one a proper conception of this important tree, but there are some promising specimens of the *Ceratonia Siliqua*, the St. John's bread-tree, of which magnificent specimens occur at Alassio and Monaco, and also of *Quillaja Saponaria*, Molina, whose bark is exported from Chili to Europe under the name of *Panama wood*, on account of its soap-like properties. It is used for washing stuffs; with its small hard leaves, its five nearly free carpels, and its woody boat-shaped follicles, it presents an exceptional appearance among the Rosaceæ. The Japanese wax-tree, *Rhus succedanea*, L., develops a more delicate foliage than the kinds grown in Central Europe. Under this favourable sky the plant begins to bloom in the beginning of May, while some bunches of fruit still remain to show that the tree is undoubtedly the right one, being exactly like the fruit exhibited by the Japanese in the Paris

Exhibition of 1878 as the material out of which their wax is made. (Compare *Dupont*, "Les essences forestières du Japon," Paris, 1880, p. 90.) *Schinopsis Lorentzii*, Engler (*Loxopterygium Lorentzii*, Grisebach), belonging to the family of the Anacardiaceæ, known in the Argentine Republic as the "*Quebracho colorado*," reminds one of the *Quebracho blanco*, one of the Apocynaceæ, called *Aspidosperma Quebracho*, Schlechtendal, which is also a native of the Argentine Republic. This latter kind of "*Quebracho*" excited some interest in medical circles, but the interest was shortlived, and the *Quebracho* wood represented in this garden by a young specimen of *Schinopsis* will owe its importance in the future probably more to its tannic matter than to any medicinal properties. The Mexican *Solanum betaceum* offers us quite an agreeable fruit; the berries are large and yellow. The fruits of *Visnea Mocanera*, L., fil., from Teneriffe, have quite a reputation among the aborigines in their own country; the plant is otherwise interesting, from the fact that it is the only species of its genus and grows exclusively in the Canary Isles. It is for the moment impossible to demonstrate further that the *Mocanera* tree belongs to the Ternströmiaceæ, as flowers and fruit are not yet forthcoming.

There has already been noticed the gorgeous magnificence of the flowers, which reaches its culminating point at this time of the year in the thousands and thousands of roses. The dainty sprays of the *Rosa Banksia* cover the stonework of an ancient arch close to the Palazzo Orenco; its slender shoots and delicate wreaths hardly seem to rest on the masonry, but climb up and wave over it. Thus this exquisitely graceful arch leads into an open winding walk, originally arched over by vines, which stretches in a level line along the eastern side of the hill and finishes abruptly at a point where the rocks slope down from the village of Mortola into the bay beneath. The end of this walk forms a sort of terrace in the limestone rock, which is here somewhat less friable, and is adorned by the elegant bushes of *Euphorbia dendroides*. On the left the eye roams over the olive-trees of the Valle di Latte, rises to the wild rocks ("Karrenfelder") of the Castello d'Appio, is attracted for a moment by the fortress of Ventimiglia, which is just now being gradually blown up by the orders of the Italian military authorities, who are anxious to preserve peace, and finds at last a resting-place in the level country around Bordighera. The latter terminates in the Capo Sant Ampeglio, an unspeakably-neglected



but charmingly-situated promontory. Pergola is the technical term for those covered walks so justly popular in Italy: the natives have a *patois* name for it, *Topia*, which is equally charming and antique.<sup>1</sup> The pillars, rebuilt in their original simplicity, sustain a rustic lattice-work of wood overhead, wreathed and festooned with the most exquisite blossoms and foliage; between the pillars the visitor catches the most charming glimpses of the sea, of the gardens, and of the Palazzo Orengo, which is especially pleasing seen from this side. Stone steps lead us either upwards or downwards out of the Topia to the stately old cypress walk, or among the newly-laid-out Acacia and Eucalyptus plantations, which are separated from the coast-line by the ancient Via Julia Augusta. In the Topia itself bloom roses of all the largest, most beautiful, and fragrant species; together with a numerous company of gay creepers, climbing plants, and bushes. The white fallen blossoms of the *Spiræa Reevesii* form a snowy covering, lighted up by the fiery or yellow reds of the *Bignonia venusta*, *B. grandiflora*, *B. rosea*, *Tacsonia mollissima* (seen and already described by Humboldt in Bogota), *Tacsonia ignea*, *T. splendens*, and *T. tubulosa*. Every known land has sent her offering of flowers or creepers to beautify the Topia. The charming Akebi of the Japanese, *Akebia quinata*, found by the late diligent explorer, Mr. Fortune, growing wild in the island of Chusan, attracts us by the delicious fragrance of its scent, and by the curious structure of its monœcious flowers. It belongs to the order Lardizabalaceæ, out of the group Polycarpiceæ. In respect of fragrance it is perhaps excelled by another plant of the same natural order, namely, the *Stauntonia latifolia*, but it is a critical matter to decide about scents; at all events the *Stauntonia* smells like the finest Neroli oil.

*Billardiera cirrhosa* (Pittosporaceæ) from Australia, *Clematis cirrhosa*, and other species of the same genus, the Australian *Hardenbergia rosea* (Leguminosæ), and *Mühlenbeckia nummularifolia* (Polygonaceæ), form the blossoming foundation to the Topia, covered by its different creepers. It is not always advisable to venture too far among the undergrowth; the curious nearly leafless but extremely thorny *Rubus Australis* sometimes bars the way, and the pretty blossoming *Loasa Wallichii*, of the family of the Loasaceæ, nearly allied to the Passifloræ, hides worse dangers than

<sup>1</sup> *Topia*, in *Vitruvius'* book on architecture, shortly B.C., means landscape painting; and the *topiarius* of *Cicero* and *Pliny* was a professed gardener.

even the nettles, in its stiff hairs and glands, which secrete an acrid fluid. Further adornment is given to the Topia by the bell-flowers of the Peruvian Polemoniaceæ, *Cantua dependens*, and *C. penduliflora*, by *Celastrus stylosa*, *Ipomea Learii*, *Lonicera Ledebourii*, many kinds of *Passiflora*, *Quisqualis Indica* (Com-bretaceæ), a plant whose seeds are well known in India for their quality as a vermifuge. A chemical investigation would be well worth making.

The rose-covered entrance to the Topia stands close to the Palazzo, before which is an open space 193 feet above the sea-level, from whence a charming view above the rich foliage of the garden is enjoyed of the villages of Ciotti and Mortola with their picturesque churches; and of the olive and pine (*Pinus halepensis*) covered heights of Belinda—1837 feet high,—from which the water, after heavy rains, rushes down the wild gorge close beside the Palazzo into the bay on the east side of the Punta della Mortola. The modest old Palazzo of the Orengo family has been gradually added to by the present proprietor. The tower has been raised, a wing on either side of the house has been built, and an elegant white marble terrace on the south front. From the outside the building presents a most pleasing appearance; from whichever side the house is viewed a distinctly new impression of it is gained,—a diversity which accords well with the wonderful variety of views obtainable from the Palazzo.<sup>1</sup> Over the arch of the entrance-porch terra-cotta medallions by Tinworth of

<sup>1</sup> The visit of Queen Victoria in 1882 is commemorated on a marble slab let into the wall over the glass door leading from the *salon* into the garden: it bears the following inscription:—

HAC IN AULA SEDEBAT  
VICTORIA  
REGINA NOSTRA SERENISSIMA  
NOBISCUM URBANITATE REGALI COLLOQUEBATUR  
MAGNAQUE CUM ADMIRATIONE CIRCUMSPECTIBUS OMNIBUS  
GLORIAM UNA VOCE INCESSABILI ENARRANTIBUS  
DOMINI DEI CREATORIS  
PROSPECTUM PULCHERRIMUM  
MANU SUA PROPRIA DELINEAVIT  
XXV DIE MENSIS MARTII  
MDCCCLXXXII

There have been many other royal and distinguished visitors, as, for instance, the Duke and Duchess of Connaught, the late Duke of Albany, the Princess Beatrice, the ex-Empress Eugenie, the King and Queen of Saxony, Prince Ernest of Saxe-Coburg, the young Prince of Naples, H. E. Kuo Sung Tao, the first Chinese Minister accredited to England and France. The Chinese character "*Fo*," meaning happiness, written by this last-named dignitary, is to be seen on the arch at the entrance to the garden.



the heads of *Linnaeus* and *A. P. De Candolle*, look down upon the glorious collection of plants from all parts of the world assembled round them. This entrance-porch on the north side of the house reminds one somewhat of the gateway in the Corte Sabbionera of the house in Venice in which *Marco Polo* is stated to have been born. A most attractive picture of this, the most famous traveller in the Middle Ages, is executed, life-size, in splendid mosaic on a gold ground on the right-hand side of the porch. In the absence of any authentic portrait of *Marco Polo*, the Venetian artist *Salviati* has managed to picture that observant traveller in a manner which cannot fail to please his admirers. Sober self-consciousness is the dominant expression in this vigorous figure, which is pictured in the enjoyment of well-earned repose in his splendid native place. His red robe is certainly not a travelling dress, and just as certainly not the garment of a prisoner of war; besides, the folio which the artist has placed in his hand, was dictated during his Genoese imprisonment. The back of the book bears his coat of arms, three ravens, and the nickname "Il Milione," which the popular Venetian wit bestowed on their great countryman, who certainly did not come back empty-handed from his twenty-four years of travelling. Over the geographical emblems and the laurel-wreath *Salviati* has placed this inscription in indestructible mosaic :—

MARCUS POLUS VENETUS  
NAT. MCCLIV. OB. MCCCXXIV.  
SINÆ PEREGRINATOR PRIMUS.

The land of China, first visited by *Marco Polo*, has become endeared by many associations to the proprietor of the Palazzo Orengo, whose feelings have been well rendered by the inscription over the hall door, placed there in 1877 by the English statesman *John Bright* :—

INVENI PORTUM  
SPES ET FORTUNA VALETE  
SAT ME LUSISTIS  
LUDITE NUNC ALIOS.

The hall, corridors, and rooms of the Palazzo also contain many art treasures chosen with judgment, and not a few objects of antiquarian interest found in the country round Mortola. On the south side of the house there are still more remarkable groups of plants. Among mighty specimens of the stiff *Agave* and *Aloe*

species there is the tender green of the *Schinus molle*, L., which is called *Pepe* in Italy, on account of the slight resemblance of its berries to those of the true Pepper. (Spica, in the "Gazzetta Chimica Italiana," 1884, p. 199, has recorded some of his observations upon the chemical constituents of the *Schinus molle*, not *Schinus mollis*. The volatile oil contained in the leaves resembles oil of turpentine very closely.) Then there are further *Punica Granatum*, *Ferula nodiflora*, *Hedera Helix*, *Elms*, and many other native or imported trees and bushes. Leaning against the marble steps beside the bushy *Senecio*, may be seen the *Euphorbia Abyssinica*, 16½ feet high, with green, four or five cornered branches,—the edges are beset with spines instead of leaves, the flowers are insignificant, the fruit smooth and globular, an unusual incident among the Euphorbiaceæ, and only indented with six faintly indicated furrows. The milky juice flows readily at the slightest puncture. It possesses the acidity and most probably also the constituents of the juice of the other Euphorbiæ. Close by the gigantic *Euphorbia Abyssinica* may be seen immense specimens of *Opuntia subulata* and *O. cylindrica*, their rod-like stems and branches differing greatly from the ordinary characteristics of most of the Cactaceæ, which order is further represented by several specimens of *Cereus*, *Mammillaria*, etc. From this terrace the eye roams freely down the slope to the narrow coast-line, and to the rocks, against which the surf foams and dashes. The plantations down there of the shore pine, *Pinus Pinaster*, Solander, promise an efficient protection in a few years' time against the stormy west winds and the parching heat. Everywhere the native wild plants of the country push their way in among the cultivated garden plants,—some of them have been mentioned already. Walking through the garden, or in the neighbourhood of La Mortola, in the middle of the month of April, the botanical observer notices the following specimens out of the wealth of the Ligurian Flora, not by any means the whole number of plants to be met with:—*Ranunculus muricatus*, L., certainly a very ordinary species, though really pretty, and sometimes to be found with *R. Ficaria*, *Glaucium luteum*, well known to the people along the coast as *Papavere carnuto*. Among the Cruciferæ, *Raphanus Landra*, Moretti, with yellow blossoms, and globular pods ending in a sharp-pointed beak, *Cakile maritima*, Scopoli, and *Alyssum maritimum*, Lamarck, the latter growing in such masses that its pleasant odour may be smelt quite a dis-



tance off. It would be interesting to know the exact chemical nature of the volatile oil of this Crucifera. The pretty mauve blossoming *Moricandia arvensis*, D. C., also one of the many Cruciferae of the Riviera di Ponente, appears in Sicily and Calabria, but on no other part of the Italian coast. *Polygala Nicaensis*, Risso, differs only in unessential particulars from the *P. vulgaris* of Central Europe, but the brilliant blue of its great blossoms makes it a conspicuous figure among the Ligurian flora. *Cistus* and *Helianthemum* of many kinds adorn the light undergrowth of the coast and the near mountains sometimes, in conjunction with *Silene Italica*, Persoon. The delicately-formed and coloured blossoms of the *Lavatera maritima*, Gouan, form a pretty contrast to the stiff gray leaves of this Mallow, a plant eminently at home on the Riviera di Ponente. Whoever objects to the strong smell of the *Ruta angustifolia*, Pers., and of *R. bracteosa*, D. C., cannot, however, deny the elegance of their blossoms. Nearly related to the Rutaceae is *Cneorum tricoccum*, L., not as regards the smell, but it partakes of the bitterness which occurs in probably all the Simarubaceae; botanists have placed the *Cneorum* in this tribe. *Lotus ornithopodioides*, L.; *Scorpiurus subvillosa*, L.; *Dorycnium herbaceum*, Villars, and *D. suffruticosum*, Vill., are very common Papilionaceae here. A rarer plant is the silvery shining bushy *Anthyllis Barba Jovis*, L. *Rubia peregrina*, L., is nearly as troublesome with its thorns as the far more threatening *Smilax aspera*. In some damp places *Centranthus ruber*, D. C., displays its pink corymbs. To the common Compositae belong *Urospermum Dalechampii*, Desfont. (*Tragopogon*, L.); *Inula viscosa*, Aiton, not in blossom even in April; *Helichrysum Stoechas*, Gärtner; *Senecio Cineraria*, D. C. (*Cineraria maritima*, L.). *Convolvulus althæoides*, L.,—may be described as a most graceful little bindweed. *Solanum miniatum*, a variety of *S. nigrum*, differs in its red berries and its faint musk smell from the latter species. *Verbascum sinuatum*, L., with violet stamens, has small blossoms, without scent. *Scrophularia canina*, L.; *Orobanche cruenta* Bertoloni (a parasite of the *Thymus*); *Antirrhinum latifolium*, D. C.; and *A. Orontium*, L., are frequent dwellers among the rocks and walls of this coast. Among the Primulaceae there is the bluish red blossom of the *Coris monspeliensis*, L., among the Thymeleaceae *Daphne Gnidium*, L., which, however, only blooms in the autumn. Besides the already (page 10) mentioned Euphorbias, there are some remark-

able herbaceous species, viz. *Euphorbia falcata*, L. ; *E. serrata*, L. ; *E. Characias*, L., and *E. segetalis*. On the shore there are whole hedges of *Atriplex Halimus*, L. *Pancratium maritimum*, L., is far seldomer met with than *Urginea Scilla*, Steinheil (*Scilla maritima*, L.) ; the latter is planted thickly round the fig-trees, but neither of them is yet in blossom. A real adornment to the Riviera at this time of the year is the *Allium Neapolitanum*, Cirillo, so much the more as, though this garlic resembles the northern *Allium ursinum*, the garlic smell is weak in comparison : in fact great bunches of cut plants do not emit so strong a smell as a single bulb of the latter. The pretty white flower-heads of the *Allium Neapolitanum*, which keeps very well for a few days, are cut in great masses as soon as they are about to open, and sent from Mentone to London and Paris, where they are great favourites in the *salons* about Easter time ; in England they are appropriately called "Star of Bethlehem."

The handful of native-growing plants just mentioned gives just as poor an idea of the entire Ligurian flora as the preceding pages do of the riches of this garden, and of the wonderful collection of foreign plants which it contains. Visitors coming at another time of the year to this beautiful garden may not perhaps receive the same impressions, but nobody will deny that the Palazzo Orenco is one of the most exquisite spots along the whole picturesquely-beautiful coast of the sunny Riviera. The clever botanist, Prof. *O. Penzig*<sup>1</sup> of Modena, has been commissioned by the proprietor to prepare a manuscript catalogue of the plants in this garden : a glance at this already extensive work gives one a little idea of the astounding riches contained in it.

About 2000 years ago *Strabo* and *Diodorus* described the Ligurians as very poor people, whose land consisted chiefly of forest and meadow : wine and olive-oil had to be imported. Wonderful as have been the efforts of the generations which have given to the Riviera her present lovely appearance, we must still recognise the nearly total disappearance of the forests as a great misfortune ; for to this circumstance the trying dryness of the atmosphere is most certainly nearly entirely owing. Besides which, an amount of forest-land would greatly help here, as in most other places, to heighten the beauty of the country.

<sup>1</sup> He has also written an article on Mr. Hanbury's garden in the "Bulletino della Società Toscana di Orticoltura," 1883, which the writer of these pages has not seen.





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